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DEPARTMENT FOR INR/R/MR, EAP/TC, EAP/P, EAP/PD - THOMAS HAMM
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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: U.S.-CHINA-TAIWAN RELATIONS

Summary: Taiwan's major Chinese-language dailies focused news coverage November 28-30 on Taiwan's economy, which showed signs of stable growth for the first time in eighteen months; on the controversy caused by the animated news story service launched by the "Apple Daily;" and on the 46th Golden Horse Awards, considered the Chinese-language equivalent of the Oscars, which was held in Taipei County on Saturday evening. In terms of editorials and commentaries, an op-ed in the pro-independence, English-language "Taipei Times" discussed U.S.-China-Taiwan relations in the wake of U.S. President Barack Obama's China visit. The article said Taipei is now facing a crisis, given that both China and the United States are urging both sides of the Taiwan Strait to engage in political talks. A separate "Taipei Times" op-ed, written by a senior fellow at the American Enterprise Institute, called Obama's Asia trip a "self-defeating" tour as "Obama simply seems unable or unwilling to defend U.S. interests strongly and effectively." End summary.

A) "The Crisis after the Obama-Hu Statement"

Lai I-chung, an executive member of the Taiwan Thinktank, opined in the pro-independence, English-language "Taipei Times" [circulation: 30,000] (11/30):

"The joint statement issued by Chinese President Hu Jintao and US President Barack Obama on Nov. 17 was cause for concern. Taiwan was further marginalized in the triangle of relations between Taiwan, the US and China and is now in an unprecedented predicament. Taiwan must amend the Referendum Act to state that 'cross-strait agreements shall be decided by public referendum.' That is the only way for a united Taiwan to deal with the enormous pressure for political talks this nation can now expect from Hu. ...

"The US' promises to Taiwan weakened and Washington violated its 1982 'six assurances' to Taiwan by endorsing cross-strait political talks. With Obama's endorsement, Hu is expected to pile on the pressure to achieve his dream of creating an irreversible framework for unification before he steps down in 2012. ... Hu said recently that Taiwan cannot avoid political negotiations with China, meaning that such talks are likely to be on the table soon after an ECFA is inked. Judging from his sophistication and deviousness, Hu will ask that Taiwan make a commitment during the signing process to pave the way for political talks and an agenda for a possible Ma-Hu meeting in 2011.

"Just a week before the Hu-Obama meeting, China sent a large delegation of academics to Taiwan. Their tough stance on unification indicates that Beijing was aware of Washington's support for cross-strait political talks in advance. In the face of both the former's oppression and the latter's push, Taipei is facing a crisis: Political talks seem inevitable. The situation today is even more critical than it was in 1979, when the US established diplomatic ties with the People's Republic of China. The US and China are now cooperating to lead Taiwan to the slaughter. The only solution is to strengthen the nation's democratic mechanisms as soon as possible and give the public substantial power to decide its future. ... If Taiwan does not amend the Referendum Act and put

cross-strait agreements to referendums, it will find itself squeezed between China and the US into a difficult and irreversible situation."

B) "Obama's Self-defeating Asia Tour"

John Bolton, senior fellow at the American Enterprise Institute, opined in the pro-independence, English-language "Taipei Times" [circulation: 30,000] (11/29):

"US President Barack Obama's first visit to Asia since his inauguration was one of the most disappointing trips by any US president to the region in decades, especially given media-generated expectations that 'Obamamania' would make it yet another triumphal progression. It was a journey of startlingly few concrete accomplishments, demonstrable proof that neither personal popularity nor media deference really means much in the hard world of international affairs. ... Overall, Obama surely suffered his worst setbacks in Beijing -- on trade and economics, climate change and security issues. ... Many media analysts attributed the lack of significant agreements in Beijing to the 'rising China, declining America' hypothesis, which suits their ideological proclivities. But any objective analysis would show that it was much more Obama's submissiveness and much less a new Chinese assertiveness that made the difference. Obama simply seems unable or unwilling to defend US interests strongly and effectively, either because he feels them unworthy of defense, or because he is untroubled by their diminution. ... If, by contrast, Obama continues to behave as a 'post-American' president, China and others will know exactly how to take advantage of him."

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